

SPECIAL INFORMATION REPORT

Anti-Vietnam War Protest - November 1969

P R E F A C E

In spite of the past performances of Indo-Chinese communism, characterized by blood bath tactics and terrorism, the anti-war element somehow chooses to believe, or at least chooses to state, that an immediate U. S. pullout would not result, necessarily, in wholesale slaughter of hundreds of thousands of innocent Vietnamese. Since the repressive power of "Uncle Ho" consolidated in the mid-1950's, Viet history has been liberally punctuated with a brutal death dealing repression of any semblance of infinitesimal resistance. Doctor Tom Dooley wrote of Viet Minh bamboo stakes being driven into the ears of helpless children merely for the crime of being the progeny of petty village leaders. John G. Hubbell writing in the Readers Digest (an article read into the Congressional Record by Ohio's Representative John Ashbrook on 16 October 1969) deals, in gory detail, with the atrocities wrought upon the innocent and even the passive neutrals who did not voice support for Ho and his proletarian ideals. Hubbell estimates that possibly as many as 100,000 people were tortured and slaughtered by the Hanoi machine in the decade 1953-63. The North Vietnamese (and the Viet Cong) have brought to violent practice the peaceful follower philosophy of Jesus Christ - if you are not for me, you are against me - and the somewhat less peaceful plagiarism of Eldridge Cleaver - if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. Why is it that those who support the thesis that killing is evil either don't know or don't accept the probability (perhaps the certainty) that a

precipitous U. S. pullout would be followed by unconscionable carnage? How can those attempting to formulate foreign policy in the streets and who profess to treasure human life justify a move by the U. S. Government which would jeopardize the lives of those who have sought American help, those who fled the North in the 1953-54 period (one and a half million, mostly Catholics) and numerous others, to escape a communist designed supine fate? The President undoubtedly continues to enjoy the support of a large majority of the American people. The national interest and moral issues are clear, the President's choices are limited and he has taken a course that history will note to have been simple and logical and realistic.

Many of those who promote withdrawal promote other things as well. Twenty-three-year-old Don Gurewitz for instance, who is a national organizer for the Student Mobe (the Student Mobe is controlled by the Young Socialist Alliance - youth organization of the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party) demands not only an immediate American troop pullout but also cessation of all military aid to the South Vietnamese. Gurewitz' motivation appears not just in the best interests of American fighting men but more positively in the interest of spreading international communism regardless of the human life consequences. A number of other anti-war activist leaders, though not as vocal on this topic (probably because mature revolutionary judgement holds that such pronouncements would be costly in terms of naive mass support), in statements of policy, support it because they are indeed communists of one stripe or another. Among the companion demands are telltale tracks of a design to weaken the United States militarily (drastic reduction of the military establishment and a reappraisal of national priorities), to radicalize as many Americans as possible (with the issues of racism, poverty, and revolutionary domestic "reform") and to lessen the credibility of American diplomacy (through the renouncing of conventional international policies - an end to "American imperialism").

As in massive demonstrations of the past, the mid-November leadership role is being played by the dedicated peaceniks, communists, and sympathizers who have, thanks to American news media, become known national personalities. The New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a lineal descendant of A. J. Muste's November 8 Mobilization Committee for Peace in Vietnam, was born at a Cleveland meeting last summer. The call for a national anti-war conference was issued in late spring and 900 persons attended. Assorted communists, well-known sympathizers and radical pacifists formed the leadership. The planned demonstrations of 13-15 November were probably formulated at the Cleveland meeting too. Senator Paul Fannin of Arizona has stated, however, that November 15 Mobilization Day was concocted last June at a communist controlled World Assembly for Peace in East Berlin. Quite probably, sympathy demonstrations scheduled in other countries including England, France, and Germany were planned at the East Berlin conclave. Fannin has cited two members of the New Mobe steering committee who attended the June meeting. They are Barbara Bick, a leader of the heavily infiltrated Women's Strike for Peace and sponsor of the predecessor "Old Mobe" and Irving Sarnoff, member of the alleged communist front, the Los Angeles Peace Action Council, and an identified member of the Communist Party.*

The November 15 demonstrations, the child of the New Mobe with the Trotskyite Student Mobe in the mid-wife role is nothing more and nothing less than a modern manifestation of the classic "united front" operation in the old left tradition. Preferring to call itself an Umbrella, sheltering administratively, the sixty odd, protest prone, national and regional leftist and radical pacifist organizations, the New Mobe's planned demonstrations have the wholehearted support, with the exception of some SDS factions and the Young Peoples Socialist League, of all forces from the American extreme left. The YPSL, the Norman Thomas breed, believe that the November action leadership is more committed to a Communist victory than to peace in Vietnam. The philosophically-oriented SDSers hold that Vietnam is merely a calculated integral of American foreign policy, that can only be corrected by violently overthrowing the nation's political and social institutions through extra-establishment technique. They view peaceful mass protest marches as playing the establishment game. Therefore, only those in the ranks of SDS who subscribe to a culture of political masochism through violence and wish not to be confined by philosophy can be expected to participate

*Washington Report, published by the American Security Council, 21 October 1969, page 2.

and their participation cannot be expected to follow the professed non-violent posture being claimed by New Mobe leaders. As for the old left, in a September meeting of the National Committee of the CPUSA, CP General Secretary Gus Hall urged that every effort should be made to get as many people as possible to Washington for the 15th.

The principal organizations among the sixty under the New Mobe umbrella are the previously mentioned Student Mobe which is controlled by the Socialist Workers Party's Young Socialist Alliance (Trotskyite Communist), the Cleveland Area Peace Action Council, a microcosmic umbrella itself which coordinates the activities of several Cleveland anti-war groups, the CPUSA and their soon to be replaced youth group, W. E. B. DuBois Clubs of America, the National Lawyers Guild, the Chicago Peace Council, the Southern California (Los Angeles) Peace Action Council, Veterans for Peace in Vietnam, the Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialist Alliance, Youth Against War and Fascism, the Fifth Avenue Vietnam Peace Parade Committee, Women's Strike for Peace and some chapters of some factions of SDS.

New Mobe literature lists several additional participating groups including the Quaker Action Group, American Friends Service Committee, SANE, War Resisters League, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Resistance, Resist, Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, GI groups and next of kin of GI's who have been killed in Vietnam.

The actions of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee which has now also thrown in under the umbrella (or more properly, along with the New Mobe and Student Mobe have reluctantly decided to become a rib of it) because of their national impact in mid-October demonstrations, warrant individual treatment. Apparently reading failure written on the wall, for their previously stated policy of monthly escalation of a moratorium on business as usual, the VMC has now proposed a policy of "low visibility" demonstrations at campuses and communities throughout the country on 13 and 14 November. Early, after the successes of October 15 (dubious in view of Dr. Gallup's poll reflecting positive support for the President rising from 52 percent before to 58 percent after October 15) the VMC big guns, Sam Brown, Dave Hawk, Marge Sklencar (sometimes called Marge Boxcar in view of her physical abundance) and David Mixner, perceived that the November show was fully in the New Mobe tent.

There followed undoubtedly a painful appraisal with the alternatives rather limited. They could either renounce New Mobe plans and jeopardize their future viability through a November failure (how could they sustain their average of October with everyone death marching in the Capitol) or they could embrace the New Mobe plan and hope that on the morning after they could emerge unsoiled and uncolored as a continuing "liberal" force for sincere peaceniks to rally round. Backs to the wall, the VMC leadership opted for lukewarm endorsement that has now grown to active participation and organizing. The VMC has paid a tremendous price for their decision. The committee has at least temporarily, lost practically all support in the halls of Congress including New York Senator Charles Goodell. The Clergy, too, for the most part seem to have recognized the New Mobe for what it is and have shied away from endorsing November activities. If there was ever any question that the VMC was different, was wholesome and was a suitable tub for sincere anti-war Americans to bathe in, that question is being answered more graphically each day. Those dupes and do-gooders somewhere on the path toward leftish radicalism, would know if they explored the pronouncements of the New Mobe (completely endorsed now by the VMC) that they must, to be good anti-war scouts, accept the statement of policy which sets forth that the Paris Peace negotiations can only be meaningful after all U. S. troops, equipment, planes, and helicopters are withdrawn and all bases dismantled. The New Mobe holds that all support should be withdrawn from the Thieu-Ky government and the people of Vietnam should be permitted to decide their own fate. These items, say the Mobilization do not lend themselves to negotiation at the talks in Paris. Rather, they must be announced by the United States as its unilateral decision to withdraw. "Then, and only then, can the Paris talks concern themselves with the only item which can be negotiated: reparations to the Vietnamese people for the damage the United States has done to their country."*

The VMC has probably chosen unwisely. Not only has their respectable support evaporated but, whether violence occurs at Washington (or at San Francisco) or not, they will probably be unable to muster noticeable support for their moratorium planned for December. VMC leadership will probably join the Dave Dellingers and Sidney Pecks and leave the democratic liberals to the fillip of Senator McCarthy et al. Draft evader Dave Hawk, a VMC leader, presently serves on the New Mobe steering committee.

*Reported in Guardian, 1 November 1969.

Of the forty-eight persons on the New Mobe steering committee, thirty are activist hangers-on from the National Mobe. This group, including such characters as Fred Halstead, SWP; Carol Lipman, Student Mobe and YSA; Arnold Johnson, public relations man for the CPUSA; Donald Kalish, UCLA's communist sympathizing professor, and many, many others, in the absence of an official list, probably comprises the roll of many of the most dangerous political revolutionaries in the United States today. Included are organizers par excellence such as Dave Dellinger and Rennie Davis and self-appointed radical philosophers such as Sidney Peck, Kalish, and Sidney Lens. There can be little doubt that U. S. involvement in Vietnam serves only as a carrier cause celebre for the ulterior motives of the New Mobe leadership. It would seem that the names of unfortunate Americans who have given their lives in Asia as well as the unconscious dupes in the ranks of the VMC and the Mobcs are merely being used to promote the traditional objectives of international communism.

It appears that support for President Nixon's war policy and Vietnamization program is growing. His speech of November 3 will not have the effect of swelling the ranks of the protest as protest leaders, pursuing a hoped for band wagon effect, say. Neither have the recent speeches of Vice-President Agnew significantly enlarged the body protest. If the President's speech had any strong impact on the American public, it was a positive one consolidating popular support behind him. The President can be clearly seen traveling every avenue, doing all he can to end a bitter war with some assurance of stabilization in Asia and protecting American diplomatic credibility. The critiques following the November 3 address by various batteries of network "reporters-cum-foreign policy expert" indicated that they failed to hear anything other than the President's appeal to the "great silent majority." Because of the White House response (reported telegrams, letters, and calls) and a Gallup telephone poll following the speech of the 3rd, the American people, fortunately, heard considerably more than the critics. Although the validity of Dr. Gallup's quickie on the evening of the 3rd is practically unmeasurable it is most certainly significant that 77 percent supported President Nixon and even more significant that only 10 percent openly rejected the policy of his administration.

Some counter-action to New Mobe demonstrations is being planned but it appears that it may be traditionally feeble. Not that

there is not sufficient support of the President's Vietnam policies, but mainly because it comes from people who just don't normally demonstrate their convictions in a flamboyant extroverted manner. The National States Rights Party (hardly a political knight in shining armor) at a recent Cincinnati meeting announced plans for seventy members to come to Washington in an effort to stir up trouble with the hippies and to disrupt the demonstration. Veteran groups, more sincerely but probably not with overwhelming success, are planning a counter-offensive with the code name "tell it to Hanoi." They will launch a telephone campaign and on Veterans Day will promote flying American flags and burning porch lights and headlights. Among the involved groups are the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Disabled American Veterans.

The schedule of Washington events has remained relatively constant. The demonstrators will assemble on the evening of the 13th and will march and rally until the evening of the 15th (see SIR calendars for detail of events). Plans call for protest "rock" entertainment but so far no specific acts have been announced. Organizers, however, recognize the draw power of the Woodstock Festival and won't hesitate to employ such tactics to increase and excite the crowd. The matter of licenses and permits is still being negotiated between New Mobe leaders and Mr. Dean of the Justice Department.

As for numbers involved, the mid-November demonstration shapes up to be extremely large. Estimates have ranged from 50,000 to 600,000 and organizers and observers alike seem to admit by their estimates that they just don't know. Buses, planes, and trains have been chartered, however, and Washington will surely be full to overflowing. All local universities, usually through chapters of the Student Mobe, will be active. The best guess, based on various estimates from all sides and reported in media of all types to date is that the demonstration will number in the neighborhood of 150,000.

Unlike the protests of October 15, all the signs are up that November will not be totally non-violent. The New Mobe is unquestionably more violence prone than the VMC. Then, too, other far more irrational elements are scheduled to be present in just one place (two places counting San Francisco) than a month ago. If violence is planned (and it may be by such groups as Weatherman-SDS

and Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman's YIPPIES) any exact plans are naturally unknown. Aside, however, from planned violence, with such a group, of such a size, spontaneity, accidental police confrontation and bickering among participating factions must be regarded as a highly potential trouble syndrome. Factionalism has badly split the San Francisco effort and as a result the crowd will probably be smaller (best guess 50,000), but madder.

Other, peripheral activities may also provide a fertile climate for violence. The YIPPIES and SDS Weatherman plan a march on the Justice Department, an action not endorsed by the Umbrella. The Washington anti-Three Sisters Bridge advocates have also asked for volunteers to remain in Washington on Sunday for another round of protests. With all the violence potential, it would seem indeed a miracle if, come Monday the 17th, no heads and no glass had been broken in the streets of Washington and San Francisco.

There are no stated plans by the New Mobe to take over buildings or to resort to physical means to shut down Government operations. The greatest potential for trouble appears to be Weatherman and Abbie Hoffman's threat to lead his bearded and sandled followers in an assault on the Department of Justice in support of the Conspiracy 8 (minus 1). CIA facilities have not been specifically mentioned to date and will probably remain uninvolved, although any serious disturbances that occur could escalate and involve CIA facilities that happened to be in the immediate area.

New Mobe leaders appear convinced that if violence occurs the movement loses and the administration wins. If they are sincere in anything it is probable that they are sincere in fervently discouraging violence by the sprinkling of militants in their ranks. Since, however, the Mobe has not directly excluded participation by any group or any individual and has denied responsibility for any and all peripheral demonstrations, if violence occurs, the aftermath will most likely see an attempt to shift responsibility for the violence to police brutality and the "fascist establishment." They have picked and allegedly trained a corp of marshalls to promote order. Only time will chronicle their success.